

*Citation read on the occasion of the Granting of the degree of
Honorary Doctor of Laws to
Bill Turner
by the Senate of the University of Victoria*

June 7, 2007

Mr. Chancellor, I am honoured to introduce William Charles Turner to this assembly. Bill, as he is known to nearly everyone, was co-founder of The Land Conservancy of British Columbia in 1997 and served as its President and Executive Director until 2004 while creating an enduring legacy for the citizens of British Columbia and the world.

Many people render great service to society by volunteering their time, knowledge, and wealth. Our society would be a barren place if they did not. But it takes someone of rare vision to create an institution that allows people to make their own contribution to the wider society. In this case, an institution whose mission is to preserve heritage sites that touch multitudes.

For this work, he has been deservedly recognized as Victoria Citizen of the Year in 2002, received many awards for conservation and environmental stewardship, and appointed to the Order of Canada in 2005.

When Bill's colleagues describe his work with The Land Conservancy they use an interesting set of words: 'tireless, shrewd, idealism'. This must be an unstoppable combination of characteristics. He has been tireless at showing competing interests how they can all gain something from preserving a site. He has been a shrewd negotiator, and the idealism speaks for itself.

In the last 10 years, The Land Conservancy has raised 35 million dollars to protect more than 200 unique sites that amount to more than 100,000 acres with unique biodiversity, landscape, or cultural value.

All of us have at some time in our lives returned to a place which holds powerful memories, only to discover that special place is gone. A woodland has become a housing subdivision, an iconic building has become an office tower. Preserving such places, so that they can become powerful memories for others, requires vision, patience, courage, and tireless hard work. Losing them forever requires nothing. The Land Conservancy, as envisioned by Bill Turner, is an institution that saves remarkable parts of our heritage for today and for tomorrow by making it possible for everyone to contribute to preserving those places that create powerful memories.

These are places that capture the great themes in the history of this province: Land purchased along the Horsefly River protecting salmon spawning habitat; land covenants protecting old-growth forest; the Abkhazi gardens rescued from condominium development; the purchase of Joy Kogawa's childhood home immortalized in her novel *Obasan*; The Sooke Potholes added to the regional park system.

These places will continue to create powerful memories and remain tangible symbols of our natural and cultural heritage because of the dedication of Bill Turner and the people he has inspired.

Mr. Chancellor, I'm truly honoured to present William Charles Turner for the degree of Doctor of Laws, *Honoris Causa*.

*Written and presented by
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